

Announcement of NTELOS Plan to Construct Federally Funded Broadband Network in Alleghany County

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September 8, 2010

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Low Moor, Virginia

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I am pleased to join you in Low Moor today in announcing the plan to provide high speed Internet services to more than 4,000 homes and more than 200 businesses in Alleghany County.

More than fifteen years ago, I encouraged local governments throughout the Ninth District to find a means of deploying broadband networks so that affordable high-speed Internet access would be available to businesses and residents throughout our region. My goal in making this recommendation was to set our region apart in comparison to other rural areas of the nation, to make us more attractive than the typical rural region to industries looking to expand their operations into new locations, and to create technology-based jobs for Southwest Virginians.

I have been working for several years with officials in Alleghany County to secure the federal funds needed to expand its broadband infrastructure, and earlier this year, our work bore fruit.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Utilities Service through its Recovery Act broadband grant program, at my urging, provided a federal grant of \$8,062,088 to NTELOS for the construction of a broadband network to bring high-speed Internet services for the first time or improve existing high-speed Internet services to residents throughout the NTELOS service area in Alleghany County.

With the benefit of the federal funds, NTELOS will construct a fiber-to-the-premise network to bring broadband services to 4,216 households and 233 businesses in a large portion the NTELOS service area in Alleghany County. The new broadband network will provide many residents with high-speed Internet for the first time and will provide better Internet services for others. The fiber-optic cable will be installed in portions of Iron Gate, Low Moor, and Glen Wilton. In addition, the fiber will be installed along Griffith Rd., Forty-Two Road, Virginia State Route 600, Douthat Park Road, Rich Patch Road, Moss Run, Johnson Creek Road, Indian Draft Road, and Dunlap Creek Road.

As part of the project, in addition to the homes and businesses, new high-speed Internet services will be provided or existing services will be improved for 36 community facilities. Those include Blue Ridge Cancer Care, Boiling Springs Firehouse and Rescue Squad, Brian Center Nursing Care, Jackson River Family Practice, the Virginia Department of Transportation office, the Dunlap Fire Department and Rescue Squad, the Falling Spring Fire Department and Rescue Squad, the Sharon Fire Department and the YMCA here in Low Moor.

The new fiber-to-the-premise Internet access services will improve the quality of life in the region, providing residents and businesses in Alleghany County with new opportunities for communications, education, entertainment, shopping and conducting business online. Local entrepreneurs will be able to enhance their businesses with online tools and reach new customers, and residents will have the option of telecommuting.

And the new high-speed Internet services will ensure the region is able to attract technology-based businesses requiring widespread availability of high-speed Internet services.

Just as first canals, then railroads and then highways were the major arteries of commerce in earlier eras, in the 21st Century, access to broadband will be a defining feature of economic success for rural communities. Step by positive step our expanding broadband infrastructure is assuring that our region's communities will be at the center of economic opportunity.

It is estimated that the construction of the new fiber-to-the-premise network will employ 40 individuals directly during construction. The new network will also help create many more jobs in Alleghany County upon its completion, and I am extremely pleased that the Rural Utilities Service granted my request for this funding.

I would like to take the opportunity of these remarks to offer thanks to several individuals without whom today's success would not have been possible.

I want to thank Frank Berry, President of NTELOS, for pursuing this significant expansion of broadband infrastructure in Alleghany County.

I also want to thank Steve Bennett, Chair of the Alleghany County Board of Supervisors, and the other members of the Board for their leadership and foresight in bringing high-speed Internet services to more Alleghany County residents.

I would also like to offer my thanks to Mark George, Chairman, and the other members of the Alleghany Highlands Economic Development Corporation for their work towards the County's economic future.

David Kleppinger, Executive Director of the Corporation, also deserves our thanks today.

I also want to offer my thanks to Jonathan Adelstein, Administrator of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Utilities Service, for granting my request and providing funding for this project.

I would like to thank Mary Campanola, Rural Utilities Service Outreach Coordinator, and Richard Jenkins, Area Manager for Telecommunications for the Rural Utilities Service, for their outstanding work on behalf of this project.

Finally, I would like to recognize Laura Lee, my Deputy Chief of Staff, for the work she has performed for this project. I place a high priority in my office in obtaining successes much like the one we celebrate today, and Laura's work is vital to our efforts to deploy new broadband technology throughout Southwest Virginia.

I want to commend all here on the significant achievement we celebrate today and offer special congratulations to the residents and businesses that will soon have access to new or better high-speed Internet services.